

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TANANA 00311 231616Z

47 42

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SY-04 OC-05 CCO-00 OPR-01 A-01

SR-02 ORM-01 PER-01 SS-15 PM-03 SSO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /059 W

----- 015178

R 211150Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6967

NASA HEADQUARTERS WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

MARSECTYGDDBN WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0311

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAOS: AWRD, MA US

SUBJECT: HANDLING OF TANANARIVE'S EMERGENCY

DEFENSE FOR DIA

1. I WANT FIRST TO REGISTER FORMALLY WITH DEPT, DIA, MARINE SECURITY GUARD BATTALION, USIS, AND NASA MY RECOGNITION AND THANKS FOR SUPERB PERFORMANCE OF ENTIRE STAFF, AMERICAN AND LOCAL, OF TANANARIVE MISSION DURING LAST WEEK'S HEAVY FIGHTING AND AFTERMATH. THEY WERE COOL, CALM, COLLECTED, DEVOTED AND WELL ORGANIZED, AND OPERATED MAGNIFICENTLY AS TEAM THROUGHOUT CRISIS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TANANA 00311 231616Z

2. SPECIAL THANKS GO TO THOSE MEMBERS OF STAFF WHOSE

COURAGE AND COOLHEADEDNESS ENABLED EXTRICATION UNDER FIRE OF SEVERAL AMERICAN WIVES AND CHILDREN (INCLUDING MRS. MENDENHALL) FROM DANGEROUS ZONE. WHEN ONE SEES, FOR EXAMPLE, EXTENT OF DAMAGE INFILCTED BY SUBSTANTIAL FIRING ON PANORAMA HOTEL (JUST BEHIND RESIDENCE), ONE REALIZES EXTENT OF ORDEAL THROUGH WHICH EVACUEES AND THOSE WHO EXTRICATED THEM PASSED.

3. EMBASSY PREPARING RECOMMENDATION FOR SPECIAL DEPARTMENT AWARD TO THIS MISSION AND ITS STAFF FOR HANDLING OF EMERGENCY.

4. WITHOUT EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS OTHER THAN VOICE E&E RADIO SINCE FEB 12, EMBASSY REITERATES PARTICULAR THANKS TO PRETORIA, BLANTYRE, NAIROBI AND DAR ES SALAAM FOR CONSTANT COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT PROVIDED US. WE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO WHAT WE UNDERSTAND IS ONE-MAN C&R OPERATION AT BLANTYRE FOR CEASELESSLY GOING FAR BEYOND CALL OF DUTY TO PASS OUR VOICE MESSAGES TO PRETORIA FOR ONWARD TRANSMISSION.

5. WE ALSO WANT OC AND RCO KNOW THAT BOTH IN-COUNTRY E&E RADIO NETWORK AND EXTERNAL E&E RADIO LINK HAVE PROVEN ABSOLUTELY INVALUABLE DURING EMERGENCY. ONLY FAILURES WERE TWO RADIOS IN RESIDENCE WHICH LEFT MRS. MENDENHALL WITHOUT COMMUNICATION WITH EMBASSY FOR 18 HOURS DURING MOST CRITICAL PERIOD, BUT THOSE FAILURES COULD NOT BE HELPED AS ONE CAME FROM POWER CUTOFF BY MALAGASY AND OTHER FROM LAST-MINUTE BLOWN FUSE.

6. WE ALSO APPRECIATE SPECIAL SY AND RSO SUPPORT GIVEN BEFORE EMERGENCY COMMENCED -- SUPPORT WHICH WE FORTUNATELY DID NOT HAVE TO CALL INTO PLAY.

7. I MIGHT ADD THAT I ANTICIPATED WE MIGHT BE CALLED ON TO DEAL WITH ASYLUM PROBLEMS SINCE REBEL ARMED POLICE UNIT HAD FOR TWO YEARS FURNISHED PROTECTION TO EMBASSY AND RESIDENCE AND I HAVE PERSONALLY KNOWN AND TALKED TO MANY OF GUARDS. BUT NONE, AT LEAST YET, HAS SOUGHT REFUGE WITH US.

CONFIDENTIAL
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PAGE 03 TANANA 00311 231616Z

8. EMBASSY AND RESIDENCE HAVE NOW BEEN WITHOUT POLICE PROTECTION FOR MONTH DESPITE OUR PERIODIC FOLLOW-UP WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES.

9. NORMAL TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS MAY REMAIN SUSPENDED FOR SOME TIME LONGER, MAINLY, I BELIEVE, BECAUSE COMMANDER RATSIKAKA, WHO HAS RESUMED CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN MILITARY DIRECTORY, IS ATTEMPTING DEMONSTRATE TO EMBASSIES

THAT WE AT MERCY OF MALAGASY NOW ASSERTING FULL SOVEREIGNTY. WE THEREFORE BEG CONTINUED INDULGENCE AND HELP OF NEIGHBORING POSTS IN OUR COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEM.

10. RIGOROUS PRESS AND MAIL CENSORSHIP EXISTS. ENTIRE LATEST ISSUE OF LUMIERE CONFISCATED. MADAGASCAR MATIN FREQUENTLY APPEARS WITH WHITE SPACES REFLECTING EXCISES.

11. AFTER ABOVE DRAFTED BRITISH AMBASSADOR, VICE DEAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS, TOLD ME HE HAD CALLED ON FONMIN ZAKARIASY FEB 21 TO DISCUSS SITUATION AND PROBLEMS. FONMIN AGREED SITUATION RETURNING TO NORMAL, BUT SAID SPECIAL MEASURES MAY CONTINUE FOR 2-3 MORE WEEKS. (WE IN FACT CONTINUE HEAR FIRING FROM TIME TO TIME, INCLUDING BAZOOKAS.) FONMIN ASSURED BRIT AMB DIPLOMATIC POUCHES WOULD BE ALLOWED MOVE WITHOUT HINDRANCE, AND THAT TEMPORARY HOLD-UP HAD BEEN MISTAKE. BRIT AMB PUSHED HARD ON RESTORATION TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS. FONMIN AGREED PERSONALLY AND SAID HE WOULD TAKE UP QUESTION WITH GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO.

12. UNTIL CLASSIFIED CABLE SERIES RESTORED, WE PROPOSE CONTINUE SENDING TAPES TO PARIS BY DIPLOMATIC POUCH FOR ONWARD ELECTRICAL TRANSMISSION. APPRECIATE PARIS' HELP.
MENDENHALL

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